Imported GM food

753. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that imported Genetically Modified (GM) food which have been banned by Government are freely entering into the country with the tag 'Non-GM food';

(b) if so, the facts and the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has contemplated any step to check the entry of imported GM food and to punish importers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) As of date there is no ban on import of GM food. The import of GM food is governed by two regulations namely:

- The entry of GM food at various ports of entry is governed by the DGFT notification dated 7th April, 2006. The DGFT notification requires:

(i) All applications for import of GMOs/LMOs for research, bulk import of GM food, feed, raw or processed or any ingredient of food, food additives or any food product that contains GM materials will require prior approval by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC).

(ii) At the time of import, all consignments containing products which have been subjected to genetic modification will carry a declaration stating that the product is 'Genetically Modified'.

(iii) In case a consignment does not carry such a declaration and is later found to contain genetically modified material, the importer is liable to penal action under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

- 'Rules for the Manufacture, Use, Import and Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro-Organisms / Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells, 1989', commonly known as 'Rules 1989' issued under the provisions of the EPA, 1986.

The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) notified under Rules, 1989 is the apex body to accord approval for large scale use and commercial release of genetically modified organisms. The mandate of the GEAC is to (i) ensure that all activities related to genetically modified organism are carried out in a safe manner and (ii) evaluate the impact of the living modified organisms on environmental and human health before it is permitted for commercial release. Currently there is no mechanism or mandate to monitor the transboundary movement of GM products.

(b) No such information has been received. However, two representations are under review:

• Representation from M/s Greenpeace regarding the import of GM food namely "Dorito's Cool Ranch Corn chips" manufactured by Frito Lays Inc. for Pepsico USA without the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) notified under 'Rules 1989' of EPA, 1986.

• Representation from M/s K K Enterprise whose consignment consisting of Dorito Chips of three flavors namely 'NACHO', 'TACO' and 'BBQ' has been detained at Nhava Sheva Port, Navi Mumbai

(c) and (d) The import of GM food requires the prior approval of the GEAC under Rules, 1989 of EPA, 1986 and a declaration at the port of entry. In case of a wrong declaration or import without the approval of the GEAC both, the regulations provide for taking punitive action against the importers. The Food Safety and Standards Authority is in the process of framing rules and guidelines for import of GM food. Once the FSSA is operational, the import of GM processed will be exempted from the provisions of Rule 11, of Rules, 1989 of EPA, 1986.

Jaggery production

754. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to regulate jaggery production; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Foodgrains at cheaper rates to BPL families

755. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has consulted the State Governments for identification of exact BPL beneficiaries, to implement its promise of 25 kg. rice/wheat at Rs. 3 per kg. for BPL families;

(b) whether it is a fact that the number of BPL families accounted by the State Governments are quiet higher than the number estimated by the Central Government; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to figure the exact number of proposed BPL beneficiaries under this scheme, along with the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Government proposes to enact the